



News Release

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Leave some for your neighbors: Don't buy more than you need

OLYMPIA – The [COVID-19](#) pandemic may have you rushing to the store to stock up on hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes and other supplies.

But before you sweep the store aisles clean of these items, you might want to remind yourself of the harm you're causing to yourself and your community by overstocking. The more you overstock those supplies, the less is available for your sick neighbors, and for doctors, dentists, and emergency response personnel. Doing our part to keep vulnerable people healthy includes making sure they have access to necessary supplies.

Grocers say consumer overstocking – not a disrupted supply chain -- is the main reason their store shelves are empty of many supplies and food items, especially hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, toilet paper, and plastic gloves.

“We want the public to be assured that if they will return to their normal pace of grocery shopping that there will be an adequate supply of products for their consumption,” said Jan Gee, president and CEO of the Washington Food Industry Association and its educational foundation. “We also want the public to be assured of the fact that the grocery stores are taking extensive measures to reduce any opportunity for contamination in our stores, and with the public’s cooperation, we will continue to provide a clean, virus-free environment stocked with healthy and fresh foods for everyone.”

Some consumers also seem to perceive a need to stock up on certain items such as bottled water. Health officials say [water supplies are fine](#). Health experts emphasize the best way to protect yourself from infection is through good hygiene and limiting contact with others, not by overstocking certain supplies.

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Remember:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds multiple times a day is the best way to reduce your risk of infection. Hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol is recommended if you aren't able to wash your hands with soap and water.
- Try to stay six feet away from others, and stay away from others in larger social gatherings.
- Regularly disinfect surfaces in your home and workspace.
- Stay home if you're sick.
- Don't buy more supplies than you absolutely need.

We all want to stay healthy and reduce the risk of infection for ourselves and others in our community. Help do your part by only buying what you need, and leave some for your neighbors.

DOH has established a call center to address questions from the public. If you have questions about what is happening in Washington state please call 1-800-525-0127 and press #.

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